

# Librarians' Experiences with Teaching Grey Literature to Practitioners

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# What We Have Discovered & What We Will Discuss

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- The Value of Information Literacy
- The Impact of Grey Literature on Information Literacy
- Information Literacy in a Medical Context
- Grey Literature in the Health Sciences
- Teaching Grey Literature Using Problem-based Learning (PBL)



# The Value of Information Literacy

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“ Not having the information you need when you need it leaves you wanting. Not knowing where to look for that information leaves you powerless. In a society where information is king, none of us can afford that.”

**(Lois Horowitz, 2007)**

The Information Literate Individual:

one who is able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information”

(Webber and Johnston, 2000, p. 382)

**Our goal:** allow the user to take control of his/her own learning



# Information Literacy

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- Grey literature must coincide with published material when conducting research, particularly systematic reviews
  - **IMPACT:** limit bias
- Learners learn more when searching for grey literature!
  - **IMPACT:** use critical thinking to apply and assess what is retrieved
- “ the unsung hero, the foot soldier, the foundation of the building”  
(Moya Mason, 2008)
  - **IMPACT:** Our goal as information professionals is to supply our clients with all of the skills necessary to experiment with various search tools and critically analyze what they have found

# The Grey Literature Explosion: Information Literacy and Technology



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- Previously hidden documents can be more easily retrieved; instantaneous access to information in both the physical and virtual world
- There is always a purpose to searching; grey literature is another avenue to make a search more effective



# Context

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- 1989: Information literacy recognized in a medical setting
- Collaboration between information professionals and faculty members is key
- The ‘discerning consumer’:



# Grey Literature in the Health Sciences

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- As a primary source of information, grey literature was cited in the medical journals that provided reliable data on research in progress. (Alberani, et. al., 1990)
- Technical reports prevailed over other types of grey literature.
- Expert searching in public health requires the ability to identify and search for resources beyond the electronically available published literature. (Alpi, 2005)



# Grey Literature in the Health Sciences (Continued)

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- Inclusion of grey literature in meta analyses
- Grey literature and systematic reviews

**Roles** of Health Science librarians in locating, retrieving, organizing and teaching grey literature.





# Teaching Grey Literature

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- Some of the valuable search strategies we incorporate in our teaching sessions include:
  - Multiple medical databases
  - Citation index searches
  - Research registries
  - Journal hand searches
  - Contact with organizations and associations
  - Presentation abstracts and conference proceedings
  - Internet searches



# Using PBL in Teaching Grey Literature

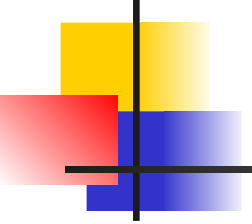
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## Outcomes of Problem-based learning:

- Capability to think critically
- Ability to find, evaluate and use resources
- Ability to work collaboratively in teams
- Likelihood of applying to real life
- Development of lifelong learning skills

## Information Literacy Standards:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively
- Understand other issues relating to the use of information



# Using PBL in Teaching Grey Literature (Continued)

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- The process of applying PBL towards a one shot information literacy instruction session:
  - Lesson planning with well-defined learning goals
  - Problem development to engage in discussions and build connections to previously learned concepts and material
  - Schedule keeping
  - Team creating in PBL
  - Role changing from a lecturer to facilitator and coordinator

# Rewarding Experience in Using PBL in Teaching Grey Literature



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- Gain insight into the structure of our end users' understanding of grey literature
- Provide the experience in learning a topic on one's own and applying it to real-world situations